

Abraham
Lincoln ~

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LINCOLN'S "MUST"

THE ONE STRIKING WORD THAT COWED THE
IMPERIOUS STANTON

ORIGINAL LINCOLN STORIES BY GEORGE T. FERRIS, WHO SPOKE FROM
THE SAME PLATFORM AS LINCOLN—JOHN WILKES BOOTH'S
BLAZING EYES

By George T. Ferris



NICOLAY and Hay, the most authentic biographers of Abraham Lincoln, have taken assiduous pains to minimize as far as possible the impression as to his utter lack of physical comeliness. Nicolay said of the great war President's personal appearance: "President Lincoln was of unusual stature, 6 feet 4 inches, and of spare but muscular build; he had been in youth remarkably strong and skilful in the athletic games of the frontier, where, however, his popularity and recognized impartiality oftener made him an umpire than a champion. He had regular and prepossessing features, prominent cheek bones, deep set eyes, and bushy black hair turning to gray at the time of his death."

As a young man, scarcely more than a boy, recently emancipated from the cloisters of an Eastern College, saw him for the first time in 1859, this description seems in memory a little highly colored. The tall, gaunt figure was somewhat round shouldered and bent, lessening the great stature, the face not reg-

ular in outline though bold and salient in features with a craglike forehead. The mouth large with rather thin lips and sunken cheeks with their lean, strong jaw certainly did not complete an ensemble which may be called "good-looking," in its conventional meaning. But the eyes were magnificent and would have redeemed a much plainer face. Large, bluish gray in color, deep set under the cliff-like brows, softly brilliant as those of a stag, and centred with a piercing light, their irradiation was magical, especially when he smiled. A scrawny neck, all sinew; large, bony hands and big feet were accented by great carelessness of attire, a habit from which Mr. Lincoln in the days of his anchored greatness was never graduated.

On the occasion referred to the man, whose rising fame was beginning to make the West clamorous and the East equally inquisitive, was garbed in a style that would have made a New York macaroni sniff. Large, baggy trousers that did not come well down over the instep, an alpaca coat, rather short-sleeved, with

nankeen waistcoat, and a wilted collar exposing the brown corded neck, certainly did not alleviate what at crude glance was an ungainly exterior. How in later conversation, in which the writer took a very humble part, Mr. Lincoln slipped easily into a transfiguration which stripped from him everything of the commonplace, was like the effect of an enchanter's wand. This did not so much appear at that time in his platform talk as in the familiar touch-and-

coln, had been scheduled as the orator. But impending illness prevented, and Mr. Lovejoy had persuaded his good-natured friend to take his place, a change which was more than welcomed. Mr. Lovejoy's brother had been killed and his printing press destroyed the year before at an "Egyptian" town by an angry "pro-slavery" mob. The natural radicalism of temperament and conviction inherent in Mr. Lovejoy's mental habit had been embittered into gall by

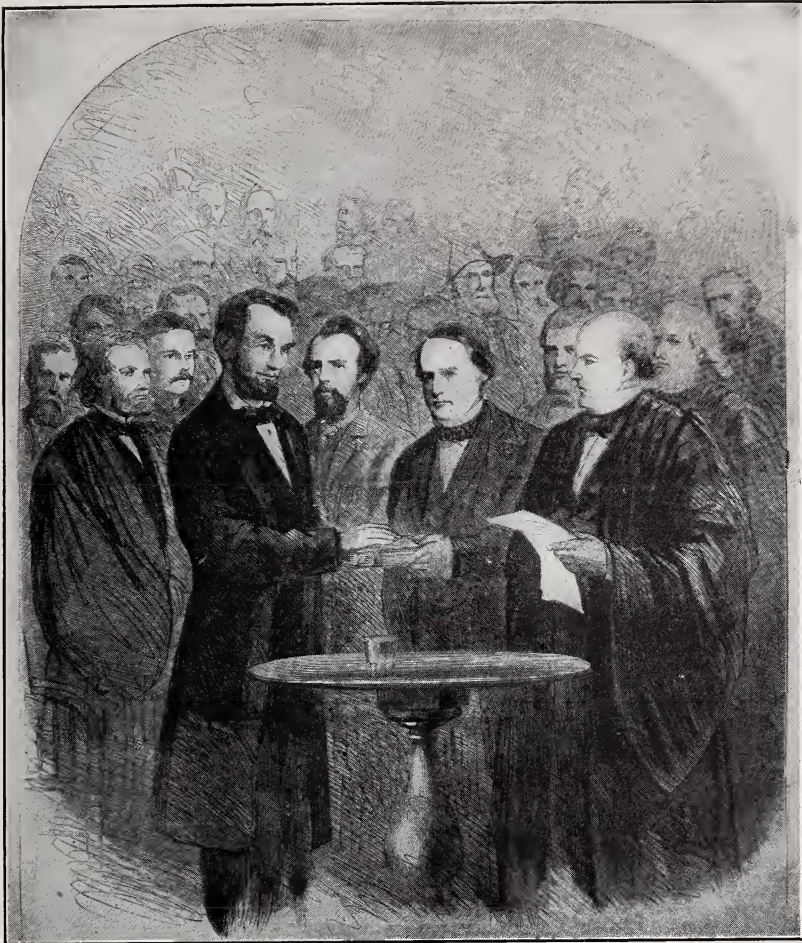


The Lincoln Cabin

go conversation with a group of friends, when the individuality of the man gleamed at so many facets and prisms. It is impossible to recall details of what was said on an occasion more than a half century since, but the impression left was intensely vivid.

It was at an Independence Day festival at an Illinois town in 1859 that the writer first saw "Old Abe," as the man encased in that homely chrysalis destined soon to burst into immortal fame was generally known to the people of the State. Hon. Owen Lovejoy, the Congress representative from the district and an intimate friend of Mr. Lin-

this political crime, and some of the more prudent Republicans had dreaded a firebrand touch in his Fourth of July talk. When it was known that Mr. Lincoln was coming, the feeling of satisfaction was something like a relief, for the Republicanism of that day was tentative and believed in making haste slowly. Lincoln's wonderful public debate with the "Little Giant" the year before had set him in the limelight, as one who embodied the terms of an inexorable logic with an illuminating force, which was also tolerant and fair-minded. If any one ever united the "suaviter in modo" with the "fortiter in re," it was

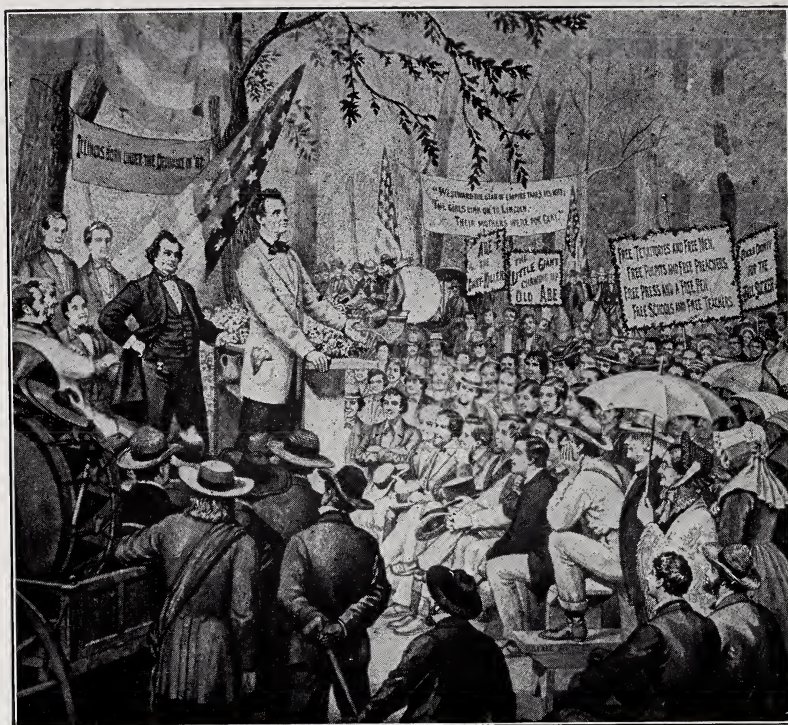


Abraham Lincoln Taking the Oath at His Second Inauguration, March 4, 1865

that glorified "country bumpkin," as many of his opponents were in the habit of calling him.

The audience numbered some thousands who had streamed in from the contiguous portions of three counties, for there was to be a grand barbecue after the platform exercises; and the beautiful green was alive with happy folk attired in all styles from broadcloth to jeans and cowhide boots, with their women folk and progeny. Horses and mules picketed at a great cordon of Conestoga wagons lent their accent to the human din.

When Mr. Lincoln upheaved his awkward length from the chair where he sat coiled up, it was with a tense and active spring and a face beaming with smiles which transfigured it. Through the general clamor hundreds of voices cried "Howdy—Abe" with a more specialized welcome. The speaker's voice at the outset was a shrill falsetto, that cut like a knife; but after talking a few minutes—for indeed it was rather an informal talk than an oration—it steadied into a strident, compelling tone that, never ceasing to be a little harsh, obsessed attention and transmuted dis-



Lincoln and Douglas Debating

sonance into a more subtle music. One could wish to have remembered and quoted, for the address bristled with homely epigrams and telling stories. But a half century obliterates detail in such matters, and only two little episodes stand out clear. Though the speech was largely non-political, addressed to familiar every day interests as they had grown out of the evolution of the nation for three-quarters of a century, he made some pregnant allusions to Senator Douglas, many of whose admirers were in the audience. Just at this time some restless mules began to bray. There was a laugh at the interruption, and a loud voice shouted satirically "That's your answer, Abe." "Very well!" responded the orator, "it seems to me the mule's hee-haw is about the only answer that can be given to the four-square truth. 'Steve' tried to do it last year and couldn't." The audience roared.

An illustration that Mr. Lincoln used stuck fast in memory. Farmers were everywhere then sinking artesian wells in a State where good water was a problem. "That's the way," said he, "that the plain people of the country will meet their troubles; drill down to where the truth stands on a steady level unchanged by rain or shine, Winter or Summer. We don't want any more supply from the surface." Everybody, of course, recognized the allusion to the doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty"—that shallow and delusive panacea which had been the main issue in the great battle which Lincoln had fought with Stephen A. Douglas the year before. More came out on this fascinating subject after the speaking exercises were over and the barbecue side of the celebration with its jovial noise and free chat ruled the roast.

"Abe"—thus was Mr. Lincoln ad-

dressed by some of the group among whom the writer was standing—said one of them, "I wish you had told us more about that 'Freeport Speech of yours last year.'" The readers of today may be reminded that in that speech Mr. Lincoln put the query to his brilliant antagonist, the answer to which proved in its effect to have had as much

atorship; but that almost certainly it would defeat the candidacy of Douglas for the Presidency at the next general Democratic Convention, and that that was by far the more important object. The fertile mind of Douglas had at once found a solution. Whatever the theory and conditions of territorial government, the police power of that govern-

FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO OUR FATHERS BROUGHT FORTH ON THIS CONTINENT A NEW NATION, CONCEIVED IN LIBERTY AND DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL. NOW WE ARE ENGAGED IN A GREAT CIVIL WAR, TESTING WHETHER THAT NATION OR ANY NATION SO CONCEIVED AND SO DEDICATED, CAN LONG ENDURE. WE ARE MET ON A GREAT BATTLEFIELD OF THAT WAR. WE HAVE COME TO DEDICATE A PORTION OF THAT FIELD, AS A FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR THOSE WHO HERE GAVE THEIR LIVES THAT THAT NATION MIGHT LIVE. IT IS ALTOGETHER FITTING AND PROPER THAT WE SHOULD DO THIS. BUT, IN A LARGER SENSE, WE CAN NOT DEDICATE—WE CAN NOT CONSECRATE—WE CAN NOT HALLOW—THIS GROUND, THE BRAVE MEN, LIVING AND DEAD, WHO STRUGGLED HERE HAVE CONSECRATED IT, FAR ABOVE OUR POOR POWER TO ADD OR DETRACT. THE WORLD WILL LITTLE NOTE, NOR LONG REMEMBER WHAT WE SAY HERE, BUT IT CAN NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY DID HERE. IT IS FOR US THE LIVING, RATHER, TO BE DEDICATED HERE TO THE UNFINISHED WORK WHICH THEY WHO FOUGHT HERE HAVE THUS FAR SO NOBLY ADVANCED. IT IS RATHER FOR US TO BE HERE DEDICATED TO THE GREAT TASK REMAINING BEFORE US—THAT FROM THESE HONORED DEAD WE TAKE INCREASED DEVOTION TO THAT CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY GAVE THE LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION—THAT WE HERE HIGHLY RESOLVE THAT THESE DEAD SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN—THAT THIS NATION UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM—AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH.
GETTYSBURG, NOVEMBER 19, 1863.

Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

to do in precipitating the Civil War as did the John Brown raid. The Lincoln question was whether on the "popular sovereignty" theory the legal possession of slaves in a territory could be averted by any possible means. His friends adjured him not to put that proposition; that if Douglas answered it to the satisfaction of Illinois audiences, he would be re-elected to the Senate and Lincoln defeated in his effort to obtain the prize. Mr. Lincoln insisted and flung out that challenge. He justified it on the ground that the answer might secure the Sen-

ment could meet any exigency, was the marrow of his answer.

"We should like to know more about your reasons," Mr. Lincoln's friend went on, "for believing that you had put Steve Douglas betwixt the devil and the deep sea." "Because," said he, "the Slave Democracy next year will have no use for a candidate who dares to carry water on both shoulders, and the party will be rent to the bottom, as the Northern fragment will accept no other man but Douglas." With that he abruptly changed the subject, and no one ventured

Executive Mansion
Washington, Nov 21, 1864

To Mrs Bixby, Boston, Mass.

Dear Madam.

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously in the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
A. Lincoln.

Lincoln's Letter to Mrs. Bixby

to press it further. With all his free and familiar geniality there was that in Lincoln which at once imposed silence and deference when he chose. Such, in substance, are the main incidents which the writer recalls.

The firmness and resolution that lay under the tender sympathies and kindness of Mr. Lincoln's temperament were abundantly illustrated during that wonderful four years which made him such a salient figure in modern history. Such a characteristic can be displayed in trifles as well as in critical affairs. It is such a trifle that came authentically within the writer's ken. It had indeed more quality in its revelation than many incidents touching big events. It was the experience of a near relative, who

had official business at the White House in 1863.

He had been appointed by the Governor of his State to act as its legal representative in straightening out a certain tangle, relating to the State apportionment of troops under the conscription of that year. There had been much correspondence with the War Department, in which the imperious temper of Secretary Stanton, who always tended to ride rough shod over all opposition, and who resented what seemed to be the slightest interference with his will, had been almost insolently displayed. He had absolutely refused to permit any adjudication or compromise of the issue; refused even to discuss it. Governor Buckingham's instructions to his

Commissioners were to refer the whole question directly to the President. Mr. Lincoln's strong sense of equity was widely recognized. It was also believed that no man in the Cabinet had so much influence over his chief as the great war-minister, and it was with some misgiving that the two impressions were balanced in the scales. The truth seems to have been, as shown by all the memoirs of the war period, that President Lincoln saw in Stanton the man of men in a most onerous position to do things, and to get them done by others; a man, who had no patience with failure; a human dynamo who never ran down, and kept the immense war machinery humming with his own electric energy. Such an invaluable instrument as this was permitted so much license, sometimes verging on insolence, that other officials who looked on sometimes marveled at the President's patience with the American "Louvois." But if Lincoln knew Stanton, Stanton also knew Lincoln.



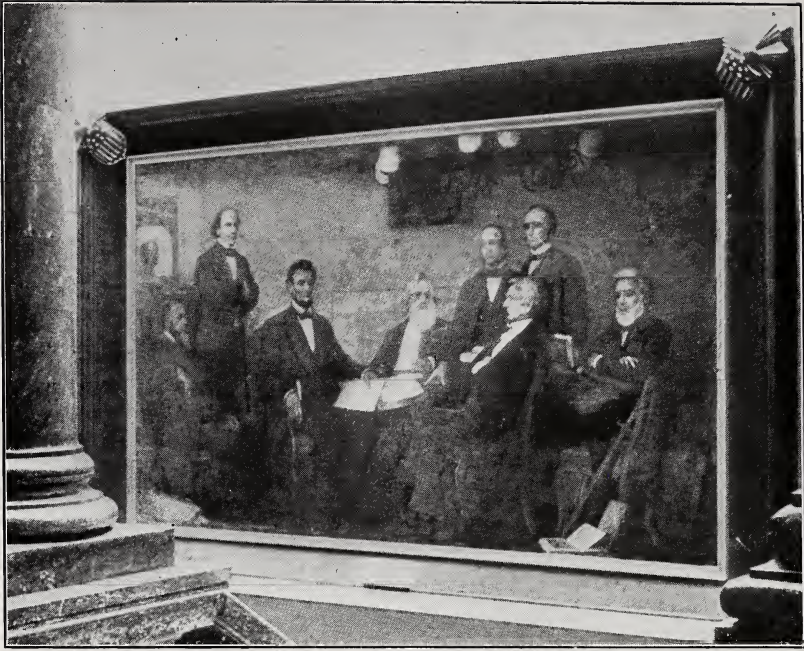
Edwin M. Stanton
Lincoln's Secretary of War



Stephen A. Douglas

The State Commissioner was most courteously received by Mr. Lincoln, who was satisfied with the elucidation of the affair. He endorsed his opinion on the papers, and Mr. F., with a card of introduction, proceeded with them to the War Department. He made his business known with its latest credentials, but Secretary Stanton burst into a furious tirade against his Chief for interposing in matters whereof his knowledge was nil, stormed up and down his office for half an hour, and metaphorically kicked his visitor out with a curt refusal. A second call at the White House etched a stern wrinkle over the President's habitually kind eyes, now, however, with a little blaze in them, as he received the report of that sinister reception; but in a moment he laughed. Snatching a pen he wrote one short word, "Must," underscored three times, and signed "A. Lincoln" on the document envelope.

"Perhaps Mr. Secretary will be a little more civil this time. Come back again and let me know, I'll tell you a



Lincoln Signing the Emancipation Proclamation.

story then, which Stanton knows all about," he said, with a squeeze of vice-like knuckles.

The Secretary glanced at that one word, and at once ironed all resentment from his face, which became one of fascinating complacency. He had come down from his perch like "Captain Scott's Coon." The necessary business was adjusted in ten minutes. The writer's relative, however, missed the Stanton story over which Mr. Lincoln had chuckled, as circumstances prevented another interview with the President.

The last living vision of Abraham Lincoln was the most vivid and thrilling of all. It is strangely linked in memory by a sinister trifle with that final glimpse of the murdered body as it lay in the Capitol, around which surged the threnody, "the noise of the lamentation of a mighty nation," which cried:

"O, fallen at length, that tower of strength."

Which stood four square to all the winds that blow."

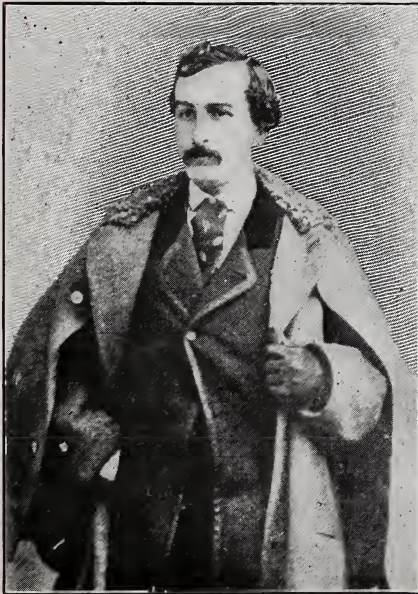
The re-elected President towered before a vast throng of hushed and reverent listeners in the delivery of his second inaugural, that masterpiece, which in its exaltation was almost lyrical, charged like the immortal Gettysburg speech with the highest tension of human emotion. This was the figure, as of some mighty archangel, trumpeting a message of grief-dashed triumph which was heard around the world, resonant above all the clamor of that world's events and still ringing in the pages of history.

Who, then, would have thought of the arch-joker, who seven years before, at an Illinois barbecue, had rallied a friend in the writer's hearing with "John, here is the ugliest man in the State, with the exception of myself, and my only advantage is that I wear a bigger hatband." Yet these antipodes lay in that strangely complex nature.

As the rapt audience hung spell-bound on the rapt speaker and solemn words, another face, a short distance away, and not fifty yards from the President, ex-

pressed a different kind of emotion. Those wonderful words were making the air one great electric throb; as they came with sustained passion of utterance: "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it will continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword; as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said now, that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

That face was distorted with rage, hate and fury, making the handsome features almost demonic as the man muttered and scowled. It was the face of one whom the writer had seen a few weeks before in New York, playing "Mark Antony," with his two brothers, at Winter Garden Theatre for the Shakespearean fund benefit, and who had wrung from the audience greater plaudits than the others by the fiery genius of his acting. It was John



John Wilkes Booth

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

(Facsimile of Theatrical Programme for the night of President Lincoln's Assassination.)

FORD'S THEATRE
Tenth Street, Washington, D. C.

Friday Even'g, April 14, 1865

THIS EVENING
The performance will be honored by the presence of
PRESIDENT LINCOLN.
BENEFIT AND LAST NIGHT
OF MISS
LAURA KEENE
The Distinguished Manageress, Authoress,
and Actress, supported by
MR. JOHN DYOTT, and
MR. HARRY HAWK.

Tom Taylor's Celebrated Eccentric Comedy as originally produced in America by Miss Keene and performed by her upwards of
ONE THOUSAND NIGHTS

Our American Cousin.

Florence Trenchard, Assz. Manager, Ana Parnoch, Sig. Edward Trenchard, Lord Dundreary, Mr. Coyle, Attorney, Lena, Vernon, E. R., Captain De Boote, Bianey, Buddcomb, a Valet, John Winkler, a gardener, Rasper, a groom, Ballie, Mary Trenchard, Miss Monmouthington, Agrippa, Georgina, Sharpe, Skillet,	Miss Laura Keene Tom Innot Harry Hawk T. C. Gourlay E. A. Emerson J. Matthews W. J. Ferguson G. C. Speer J. H. Evans J. L. Delaney G. A. Parkhurst and L. Johnson Miss J. Gourlay Miss Nancy Miss H. Truman Miss N. Hart Mrs J. H. Evans Miss M. Gourlay
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THE PRICES OF ADMISSION:
Orchestra, \$1.00 Dress Circle and Parquette, 75
Family Circle, 25 Private Boxes, . 96 and \$1.00
J. R. FORD, Business Manager.

H. Polkborn & Son, Printers, Washington, D. C.
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Aged 56 Yrs, 2 Mts. 3 Days

Always Cherish the Memory of

Born Feb. 12, 1809. Died April 15, 1865

The Ford's Theatre Programme, April 14, 1865

Wilkes Booth, who a little less than six weeks later was to imbue his assassin's hand with the blood so sacred to the nation, and to go down in chronicle as the most detestable criminal of the century. Perhaps at that time the half-crazed fanatic was debating whether he should not pistol the President from that present coign of vantage and make his escape through a dazed and dense press. But the histrionic in the man craved, perhaps, a more spectacular stage-setting as well as a surer mark. It was a passing fact which at the time stirred no second thought, but which in the relation of things to come, loomed full of tragic import.

John Wilkes Booth struck a far more disastrous blow at the South than at the North when he shot down the man who, alone of his generation, could have brought the sections together in heart-

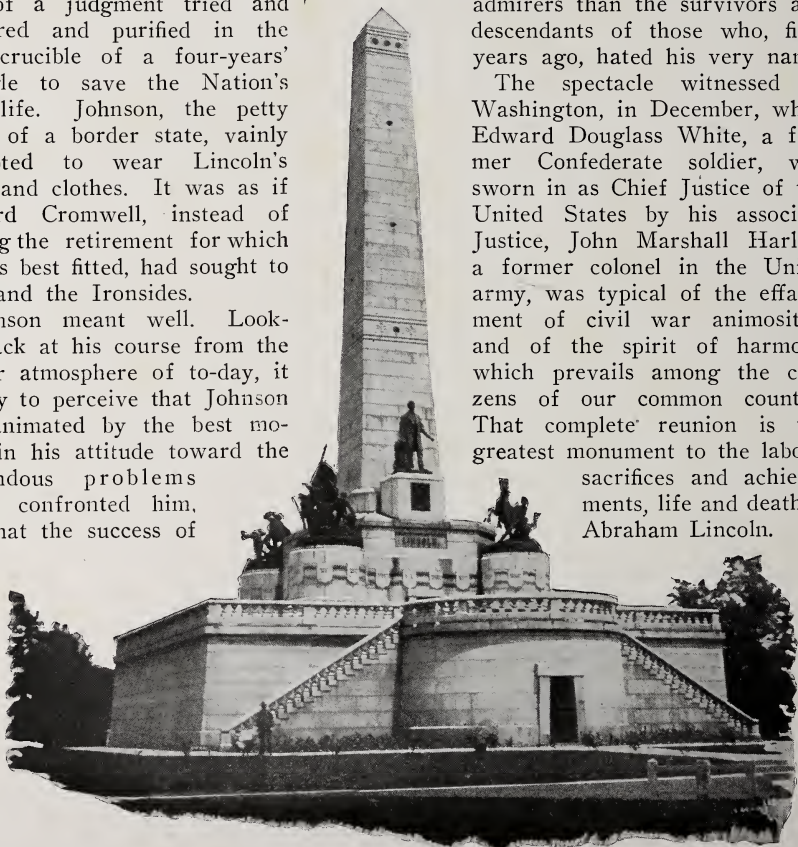
felt reunion, without the strife and tragedy, the dishonor and abasement which attended reconstruction. So far as Lincoln gave indications of his purpose and plans for bringing the vanquished South back to loyalty and fraternity, and "binding the Nation's wounds," there is ground for believing that his policy would not have been different in any essential degree from that of Andrew Johnson. But the great and signal difference would have been that Lincoln, not Johnson, would have directed the restoration of peace and unity with all the prestige, the hold on the popular heart amounting almost to idolatry that Lincoln possessed and Johnson did not. That which in Johnson seemed encroachment and usurpation, in Lincoln would have been accepted as the natural and logical exercise of a judgment tried and tempered and purified in the fiery crucible of a four-years' struggle to save the Nation's very life. Johnson, the petty white of a border state, vainly attempted to wear Lincoln's boots and clothes. It was as if Richard Cromwell, instead of seeking the retirement for which he was best fitted, had sought to command the Ironsides.

Johnson meant well. Looking back at his course from the clearer atmosphere of to-day, it is easy to perceive that Johnson was animated by the best motives in his attitude toward the tremendous problems which confronted him, and that the success of

the impeachment proceedings would have been a blot upon our National history. The problems and the position were too big for him—like the sword of Wallace in the hands of an average man.

It may be added that John Wilkes Booth represented a class with whom the real fighters of the South had no fellow-feeling—the "copperheads" who had not the courage to risk their lives for the cause with which they professed sympathy; who set fire to hotels and spread contagion, who shot and stabbed in the dark. That the former Confederates had no responsibility for the crime of Booth and that they were overwhelmed with horror and dismay when they heard of it is an undisputed fact, and it is also well known that Abraham Lincoln has to-day no warmer admirers than the survivors and descendants of those who, fifty years ago, hated his very name.

The spectacle witnessed in Washington, in December, when Edward Douglass White, a former Confederate soldier, was sworn in as Chief Justice of the United States by his associate Justice, John Marshall Harlan, a former colonel in the Union army, was typical of the effacement of civil war animosities and of the spirit of harmony which prevails among the citizens of our common country. That complete reunion is the greatest monument to the labors, sacrifices and achievements, life and death of Abraham Lincoln.



Tomb of Abraham Lincoln, Springfield, Ill.